‘Sad for us, sad for her’

Maidenhead: Chair of local Tories says PM will continue as town’s MP

By Will Taylor
willt@baylismedia.co.uk
@WillTaylor_BM

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Friends and opponents across Maidenhead have reacted to Mrs May’s departure. The Tory branch boss said he was happy she will remain as MP.

The chairman of the Maidenhead Conservative Association has said he is ‘delighted’ Theresa May will continue as MP but saddened by how Brexit dominated her premiership.

Richard Kellaway said Mrs May was right to go ahead of the European election results, which were announced on Sunday evening, but would not be drawn on who he believes will be the best Tory successor.

The former Royal Borough councillor said: “I am delighted that she plans to stay on and keep representing us.

“Bearing in mind the results of the European elections, which were heavily predicted, it was probably better for her to go then than to wait for those results.

“She was clearly dominated by the Brexit agenda, and that is sad – sad for us, sad for her.”

But he said Mrs May had had ‘good intentions’ and had helped the lower paid, raising the minimum wage and the income tax threshold.

He declined to pick his preferred candidate in the upcoming Conservative leadership election but said the party needed someone from the younger generation of Tories.

He added that it was hard to see ‘how anyone gets out of the impasse (with Brexit), however brilliant they are’.

Council leader Cllr

Richard Kellaway

Simon Dudley (Con, Riverside) took to Twitter to say: “We are immensely proud of Theresa May our fantastic Maidenhead MP and second female Prime Minister of our great country.

“We’ve campaigned together for years and I look forward to campaigning for her for years to come as we help build a country that works for everyone.”

He said he was backing either Michael Gove, Boris Johnson or Penny Mordaunt for leader.

Pat McDonald, who stood against Mrs May for Labour in 2010 and 2017, said: “The way her party was treating her, she didn’t have a choice.”

He said she had been left a ‘very, very poisoned chalice by David Cameron, but she has not really worked with her own people, let alone the opposition’ to deliver a Brexit deal that would be acceptable to Parliament.

Asked about Mrs May staying on as MP, he said: “My personal advice would be to put on her walking boots and head to the Swiss Alps. Go away for a couple of weeks.

“Get up into the Swiss Alps, have some good walks in the fresh air and then decide what you want to do.”

Mixed response to May’s reference to Sir Nicholas

Mrs May’s reference to Sir Nicholas Winton, pictured, in her speech last week received a mixed reception.

Sir Nicholas, who lived in Maidenhead, helped organise the Kindertransport on the eve of the Second World War. He helped smuggle 669 mostly Jewish children to safety from the former Czechoslovakia. A statue to him can be seen on a bench at Maidenhead railway station.

His daughter, Barbara, who is involved in refugee campaigning, said: “It was of course a complete surprise to hear Theresa May mention my father during her resignation speech last Friday.

“I do remember the context for the words she quoted – it was in 2010 when the Conservatives went into coalition with the Liberal Democrats.

“That was when my father spoke particularly about compromise being needed.

“However he talked many times about the need for ethics as well as compromise in public life, so I expect she heard it from him on more than one occasion.

“It is gratifying to hear that she remembered his words to her.”

But Lord Alf Dubs, a Labour peer who was taken to Britain during the Kindertransport and has been heavily involved with refugee and asylum affairs, said on Twitter: “Nicky Winton did not compromise. He was resolute in his determination to save refugee children like me.

“I hope that, before she steps down, Theresa May will honour Nicky’s memory by welcoming more unaccompanied refugee children from France, Italy and Greece.”

to the head of a government in turmoil

remaining opponent, Andrea Leadsom, withdrew, meaning Mrs May did not need to contest an election by a vote of the Conservative membership.

Since then, her time as Prime Minister has been – in the words of the Maidenhead Conservative Association chairman Richard Kellaway – ‘dominated’ by Brexit.

She still had to tackle serious domestic events, including the terror attacks in London and Manchester. She increased NHS funding and forced large companies to reveal their gender pay gap.

But she continues to be criticised for how families were helped following the Grenfell Tower fire, despite naming the inquiry as an achievement, and she faced intense condemnation during the Windrush scandal.

Following months of leading Labour and Jeremy Corbyn in opinion polls after she became PM, and feeling constrained by the small majority the Tories won in 2015, Mrs May decided to call a general election in 2017.

But the Tories lost ground to Labour following the release of their much-criticised manifesto.

Mrs May lost the Conservatives’ slim majority and she was forced into entering a pact with the Democratic Unionist Party,

With husband Philip, entering No 10 as Prime Minister in 2016. Ref:126077-129

who have consistently voted against the Withdrawal Agreement she drew up with the European Union on how to implement Brexit.

Her Brexit deal was rejected three times. It includes a backstop to guarantee the Irish border would remain open and was hated by some Brexiteers in her party and the DUP, and only a tiny number of opposition MPs backed it.

The launch of her fourth attempt to get her deal through Parliament proved to be her undoing as PM.

Following a badly-received speech last week, Tory MPs began queuing up to tell her to quit.

In a speech outside Downing Street on Friday, Mrs May called time on her premiership, fighting back tears as she concluded it.

Election night in Maidenhead in 2017. Ref:128230-149

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